

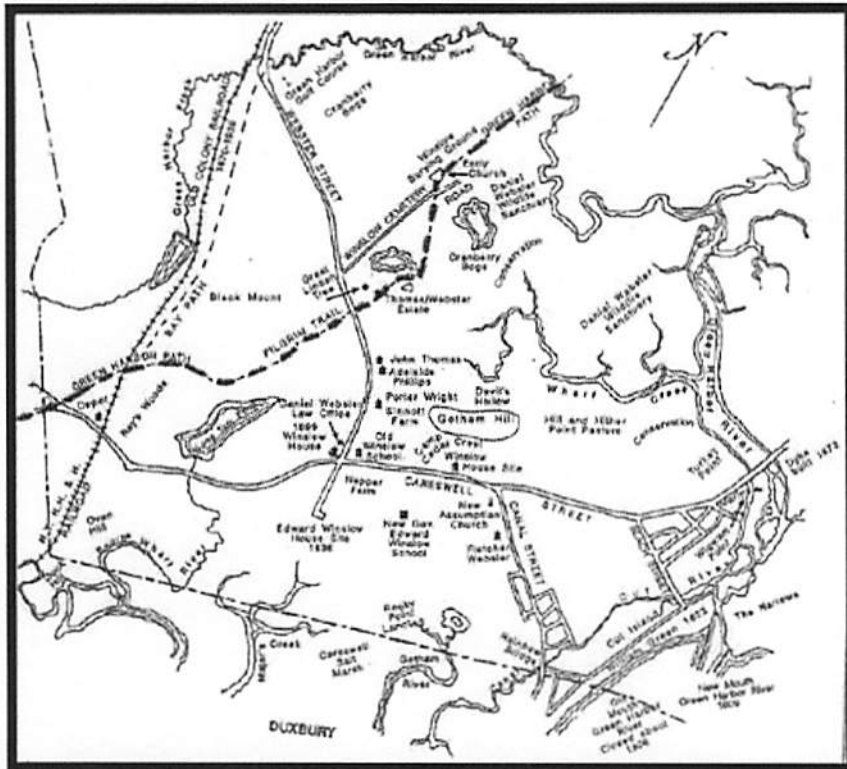
Green's Harbor Path

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There is no mystery about where Green's Harbor Path is, but where the name came from requires detective work with a little bit of deductive reasoning mixed in. What we do know from the start is that the path was named after a person, not the color. In the earliest days, it was called "Green's" with the possessive "'s."



William Green, born in London, England was one of the original "Pilgrim Adventurers" (Investors). There were about 70 of these investors, according to Captain John Smith, most of whom lost much if not all of their money. It wasn't until about 1627, when a new group of "Adventurers" renegotiated the agreement with the London backers that the Colony began to prosper.



William Green used the Path as early as 1623 to travel to the southern end of what is now Marshfield, which was also called Green's Harbor. So, not only was the Path named after him, but so was the town. In 1640, Green's Harbor was established as a town and renamed Marshfield. Over the years, this area of Marshfield has been called Green Harbor with the "'s" no longer used. Think of Green Harbor Yacht Club, Green Harbor Golf Club and Green Harbor River among others.

The Henry A. Fish worksheet map showing Green's Harbor Path

Green established a fishing station where he dried fish, salted them and shipped them to Europe. Nothing, and I emphasize nothing, is known about this William Green. It is not known what ship he arrived on, where he went, where he died or any other details of his life. Governor Bradford in his "Of Plymouth Plantation" (Morrison Edition) refers to him as "Mr. Green" (showing respect), but he also refers to Richard Green as the brother-in-law of Thomas Weston, the ill-fated benefactor of the Wessagussett (Weymouth) settlement (1623). Richard Green was the leader of the Weymouth settlement, so he was not running a fishing business in Green's Harbor.

Another William Green, whom we believe was the son of William (above) was born in London and first appears in colony records when he married Elizabeth Warren in 1683, the granddaughter of Pilgrim Richard Warren. Elizabeth had unsuccessfully sued Joseph Doten (Doty) (son of Pilgrim Edward) about 10 years earlier for fathering her illegitimate child. (We don't know if that child survived.) William and Elizabeth had a son, again William, Jr., born in April of 1684. About two weeks before the birth of his son, the Plymouth Town Meeting voted to give 50 shillings to William "towards his Cure in Meer Pitty and Compassion to him in his present misery; and not as their Charge," indicating that they were not responsible for him should he become destitute. He may have suffered some injuries in the King Philip War. He was asked to leave Middleboro later in 1684 for fear that the town would end up supporting him and his family, in "that he may become chargeable to the town." He died in 1685. If you take note of the dates of his marriage (1683) and the birth of his son William Jr. (1684) it's extremely unlikely that he would have been a man of substance in 1623, who was referred to as "Mr." Green, had a fish exporting business and was an early investor in the Plymouth Colony venture. Thus, it is my opinion that the William Green of Green's Harbor was most likely his father.

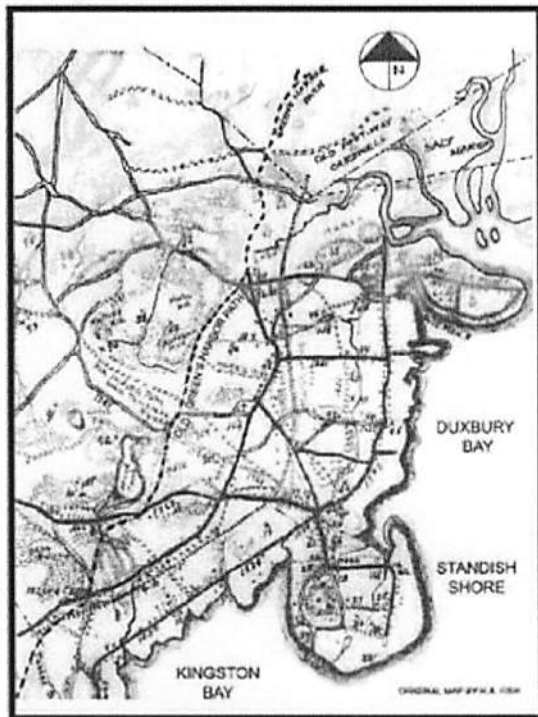
As to the Green's Harbor Path itself, it followed what is now Route 3A out of Plymouth into what is now Kingston. We should keep in mind that these paths or trails were very often where deer would travel and then the Native Americans would follow the same paths to hunt the deer. As each road was improved by settlers, they were widened and straightened for horses and ox-carts, which had been introduced by Edward Winslow as early as 1623. This path crossed the Jones River near the traffic light where 3A crosses the river now at Brook Street.

It then crossed Stony Brook just east of where Governor Bradford's farmhouse was near Summer Street. And then I believe it went along parallel to what is now Summer Street following the current Woodridge Road to Tremont Street.



If you match the Duxbury and Kingston assessors sheets on either side of Route 3, Woodridge Road in Duxbury lines up with Tremont Street in Kingston (near Stop & Shop) and that indicates, to me that they were the old Route 3A, and were reconfigured when Route 3 was built. Others have suggested that this road may have come up Parks Street, but that route would have involved more difficult crossing of the Jones River farther downstream. Joseph Rogers' ferry did not exist until the 1630s. The path turned north on what is now Oak Street, then turned northeast crossing Island Creek (the Mill Pond did not exist at that time) close to its headwaters, which would have been an easy crossing then along the easterly edge of Island Creek Pond, then to a portion of what is now Mayflower Street.

"Map from The Story of Jones River, by
S. Y. Bailey and E.F. Drew, courtesy of
Local History Room, Kingston Public Library.
(Amended to show Green's Harbor Path by L.R. Healy)



Here it took a northerly course almost parallel to Tremont Street through the town forest to North Hill. This is the area where parts of the path may be visible. From North Hill the path rejoins Route 3A at Bow Street and continues along Route 3A to Marshfield. The path continues across Marshfield where it is shown as "Pilgrim Trail" and meets the Green Harbor River just beyond the Winslow Burying Ground. Possibly it took an easterly turn near the Winslow House and terminated near the southeast corner of Marshfield where William Green's grant was (see Krusell Map), but the Winslow area became a more heavily traveled area while the Green fishing business disappeared – a problem for future research or for a Marshfield historian.

"Green Harbor Map from Marshfield, A Town of Villages, 1640-1990 - C.H. Krusell and B.M. Bates. Showing Green's Harbor Path and part of land granted to William Green (S.E. corner).

Monty Healy will be at the Duxbury History Room in the library on Saturday, November 28 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. to answer questions about his stories and Duxbury history.

